

HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA FOUNDATION



Cover photograph by Louise Krafft

TOASTING OUR TOWN 2016



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Saturday, November 12, 2016

at

The Athenaeum

201 Prince Street

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HAF WELCOMES YOU TO TOASTING OUR TOWN

It is my distinct pleasure as President of Historic Alexandria Foundation to welcome you to *Toasting Our Town 2016*. We are celebrating over 60 years of preserving and promoting the rich architectural heritage of our city, throughout all of our distinctive neighborhoods.

I would like to express my gratitude to our Corporate Sponsors, McEneaney Associates and Babs Beckwith, as well as to MARS Incorporated, for their very generous support of this event. Many thanks are due as well to all of our extraordinary donors at the Vintner, Advocate, Enthusiast and Spectator levels, and to all who have come out tonight to join our celebration. Special thanks are due to the volunteers on our Organizing Committee who have tended to every detail of this beautiful event, especially Ashley O'Connor, Mason Bavin, Amy Heiden, Mary Heiden and Katie Wiegmann. Their unfailing devotion to the cause of historic preservation in Alexandria is greatly appreciated.

We are featuring in this catalog the exciting news of the initiative to purchase the 1775 Murray-Dick-Fawcett House at 517 Prince Street for public use. It is a unique survival, virtually unaltered since its construction, having been lived in by the same family for nearly 200 years. Historic Alexandria Foundation will be partnering with the City to complete fund-raising for this endeavor. The proceeds from this year's event will be dedicated towards this very special cause.

Last year's *Toasting Our Town* funded five grants, each for \$5,000, for preservation endeavors in Alexandria. These grants were announced at the Foundation's annual Spring Garden Party. The first was to the private house museum, The Lee-Fendall House on the 400 block of North Washington Street, for rebuilding a chimney, seriously damaged by the August 2012 earthquake. The Athenaeum, the iconic Greek Revival temple-form building at the corner of Prince and Lee Streets, received a grant to begin restoration of exterior stucco. The Stabler-Leadbeatter Apothecary Museum, at 107 South Fairfax Street, will use its award for investigation and restoration of the interior *verre églomisé* windows, at the rear of the interior of the historic shop space. The Alexandria Black History Museum, at 902 Wythe Street, will use its grant for installation of a newly-designed permanent exhibition. The final grant was to the Friendship Firehouse Museum, at 107 South Alfred Street, to support restoration of two mid-nineteenth century fire-fighting vehicles, which are on display at the museum. What a varied collection of treasures our city possesses!

Thank you again for your support of historic preservation in Alexandria.

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THE HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA PRESERVATION FUND

Alexandria's history, extending back to the town's settlement in the 18th century, is distinguished. An essential part of our city's legacy is the architectural heritage that survives in the form of houses and commercial buildings. From utilitarian to splendidly elegant, these structures represent the physical link between us and all those who have gone before. The Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF) encourages preservation of this irreplaceable national treasure, educates the public as to the importance of its stewardship, and urges policy makers, developers and citizens to consider the value of historic buildings.

Since its founding in 1954, HAF has supported financially a wide range of preservation activities in our hometown. Our earliest efforts were directed towards a survey with professional photographs of early buildings in downtown—ultimately published as *Historic Alexandria Virginia, Street by Street*.

In 1990, a Preservation Fund was established, administered by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, which has awarded monetary grants to meritorious preservation projects. Over the past 25 years, we have supported a broad range of activities, ranging from “bricks and mortar” restoration work, to conservation of artifacts in our museum buildings, to scholarly research on aspects of Alexandria's cultural and architectural history. Over \$1,000,000 has been distributed by the Preservation Fund. Your participation in *Toasting Our Town* allows this tradition to continue.

PAST GRANT RECIPIENTS

1990

Rosemont Historic District Nomination
Del Ray Historic District Nomination
Alexander Family Bible conservation
Alexandria Canal Tide Lock historical marker
ALIVE House shelter restoration
Jones Point Lighthouse restoration

1991

Alexandria Academy Restoration Fund
The Athenaeum – *masonry repairs*
Garden Club of Alexandria – *Lloyd House garden archeology*
Hooff's Run Bridge National Register Nomination
Lee-Fendall House Museum – *roof replacement*
Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop – *window sash conservation*

1992

Seminary Hill Association – *survey of historic structures*
Afro-American Historic Sites Survey
The Athenaeum – *mechanical systems repairs*
Campagna Center – *masonry repairs*
Conservation of Historic Building Records at Alexandria Archive Center
Alexandria Academy Restoration Fund

1993

Gadsby's Tavern Museum – *ceramics exhibition*
Saint Paul's Episcopal Church – *undercroft repairs*
The Athenaeum – *restoration of fluting on columns*

1994

Alexandria Library Company – *bicentennial publication*
The Lyceum – *Alexandria silver exhibition catalog*
Lee-Fendall House Museum – *window conservation*
Episcopal High School – *conservation of composition ornament in Hoxton House parlor (The Eliza Custis Law house, "Mount Washington")*
City of Alexandria – *"An Alexandria Builder's Companion," historic building styles and technologies*
Alexandria Academy Restoration Fund

1995

Carlyle House Museum – *conservation survey of the Bank of Alexandria building*
Boyhood Home of Robert E. Lee House Museum – *guidebook for the historic site*
Alexandria Seaport Foundation – *conservation of the Potomac River Ark*
Alexandria Academy Restoration Fund

1996

Alexandria Library – *database of historic architectural resources*
Lee-Fendall House Museum – *historic structures report on exterior walls*
Saint Paul's Episcopal Church – *building restoration project*
Preservation Alliance of Virginia – *local affiliate training grant*
Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop – *conservation of paper records and herbs*
Alexandria Academy Restoration Fund

1997

United Daughters of the Confederacy – *Conservation of museum artifacts*
 Lee-Fendall House Museum – *exterior paint analysis*
 Saint Paul's Episcopal Church – *restoration of original trim at entrance doors*
 Alexandria Academy Restoration Fund

1998

Northern Virginia Urban League – *Museum space at "Freedom House"*
 United Daughters of the Confederacy – *restoration of photographs in museum collections*
 Friends of Historic Christ Church – *conservation study of 18th and 19th century tombstones*
 Alexandria Academy Restoration

1999

Alexandria Academy Restoration

2000

Alexandria Academy Restoration

2001

Carlyle House Museum – *historic paint analysis of interiors*
 Gadsby's Tavern Museum – *architectural investigation of the interior woodwork*
 Lee-Fendall House Museum – *support for a special exhibition*

2002

Alexandria Black History Resource Center – *installation of a permanent exhibition*
 Carlyle House – *historic paint analysis and re-investigation of historic interiors*

2003

Friends of Christ Church – *conservation study of historic tombstones*

2004

Lee-Fendall House Museum – *repairs to entrance porch and structural beams*

2005

Alexandria Archaeology – *funding for a digitized map of Alexandria*

2006

The Alexander Family Bible Conservation

2007

Gadsby's Tavern Museum – *conservation of 18th c. mirror and fabrication of a reproduction for ballroom*

2008

Alexandria Academy Restoration

2009

Lee-Fendall House Museum – *funding for restoration of historic garden design*

2010

Gadsby's Tavern Museum – *conservation and duplication of the ballroom mirror*
 Lee-Fendall House Museum – *repair of structural beams damaged by termites and dry-rot*
 Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop – *paint analysis of the interior and exterior of the museum building*

2011

Gadsby's Tavern Museum – *exhibit case*
 Greater Alexandria Preservation Alliance – *historic structure report for GW Carver nursery school*
 Lee Fendall House Museum – *restoration of the dining room*
 Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop – *conservation of gilded glass letters*

2012

Alexandria Library – *funding for the purchase of a 1796 map of Alexandria and George Washington ledger*
 City of Alexandria – *funding for the purchase of hardware for the digital survey of the Old & Historic District*
 Lee-Fendall House Museum – *for archaeological excavation and redesign of the Garden*
 Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop – *exterior paint analysis*

2013

The Athenaeum – *gutters, downspouts and repainting*
 Gadsby's Tavern Museum – *for stabilization of the ballroom flooring*
 Lee-Fendall House Museum – *purchase of audiovisual equipment*
 Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop – *dendrochronology to determine date of construction of both buildings*

2014

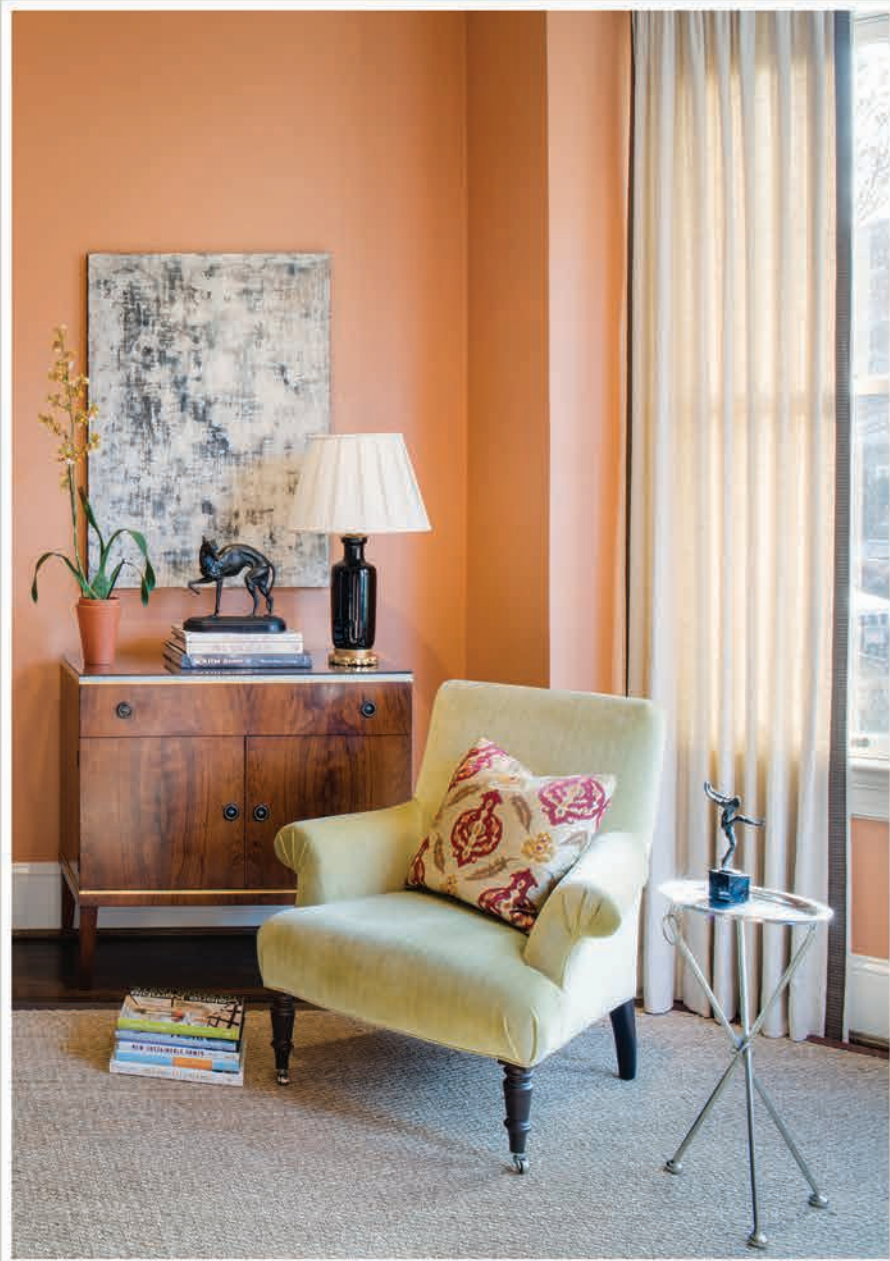
The Athenaeum – *restoration of the Doric columns*
 Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Shop – *replication of the 1850's show globes*

2015

The Athenaeum – *rehabilitation of the stucco on the Lee Street façade*
 Lee-Fendall House Museum – *conservation of the front porch columns, railings and floor*
 Old Presbyterian Meeting House – *conservation of the grave marker of Sarah Fairfax Carlyle (1730-1761)*
 Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum – *reproduction and installation of the 19th century ceiling medallion*



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1st row: Meridian House detail, Dodona Manor doorway, Decatur House; 2nd row: Meridian House, St. Paul's Episcopal Church [2]; 3rd row: Lord Fairfax House, President Lincoln's Cottage, Decatur House staircase detail

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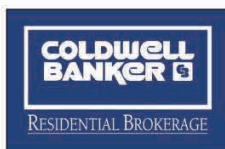
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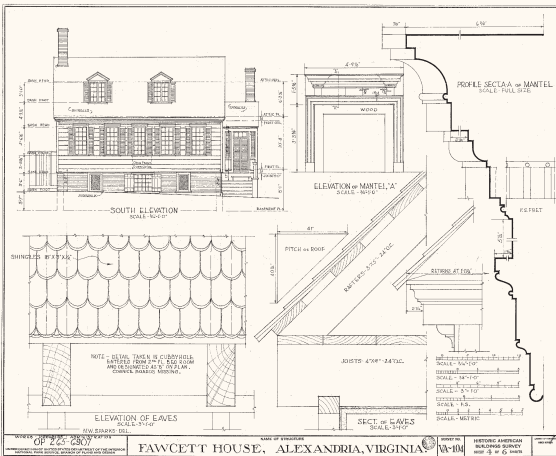
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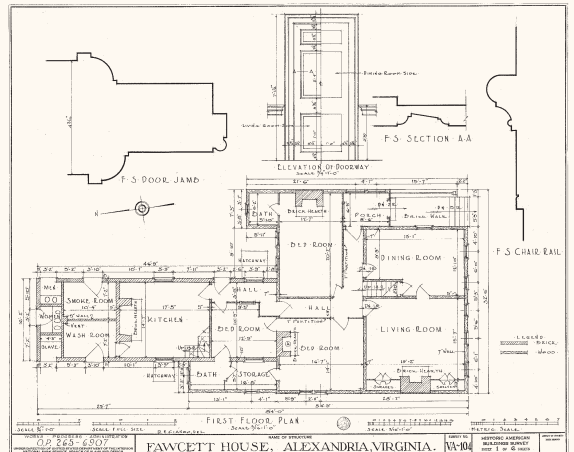
An exciting preservation initiative is moving forward now in Alexandria. The historic Murray-Dick-Fawcett House at 517 Prince Street is on track to be acquired by the City of Alexandria, with additional funding for purchase and restoration raised by the private sector. The property will be opened to the public as an historic house museum and educational center, operated by the Office of Historic Alexandria. The garden will be maintained as public open space.

517 Prince Street is one of the most interesting of Alexandria's 18th century dwellings. Dendochronology (the scientific method of dating buildings based on the analysis of the pattern of growth rings in the timbers used in its construction) has shown that the beams in 517 Prince date to 1775. As such, it is one of the earliest-surviving and possibly the least-altered 18th century home in Northern Virginia. The original 1749 boundary of the new town of Alexandria lay to the east of the future site of 517 Prince, closer to the river. Additional lands were annexed by the town in 1763, including that upon which 517 Prince was to be constructed. Patrick Murray acquired three of the four half acre lots on the square bordered by King, Prince, Saint Asaph and Pitt Streets and soon commissioned this dwelling near one corner of his property. The fourth lot on the block was purchased by George Washington for investment purposes; he built a small tenant house on his property, fronting on Pitt Street, which also remains standing today.

Murray's original frame dwelling house was one-and-a half stories above a masonry basement, five bays wide with a front entry porch rising from Prince Street to the center bay of the first floor. Prince Street was later re-graded, necessitating the removal of this porch due to its intrusion onto the sidewalk, leaving the brick foundation rising high above the new grade. By the mid-1780s, Murray, a local blacksmith, had secured enough capital to construct a shed addition across the back of his home, as well as a livery stable far to the rear of the house along St. Asaph Street. However, his financial success was short-lived; within seven years, in 1792, he was forced to sell his property to the estate of Samuel English, to whom he was indebted. For a time, the executors of the estate rented the dwelling, before it was sold in 1794 to Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick, one of the physicians who attended to General Washington at his death; Dick's tenancy was short-lived for he sold the property in 1796 to two King Street merchants. John Douglas Brown purchased it outright in 1816, adding a wing to the rear, sited perpendicular to the original front block of the house. Although the stable property was later sold off, the dwelling was occupied by Brown family descendants for



Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) measured drawings of the south elevation of 517 Prince Street.



HABS measured drawings of the plan of the first floor. Note the three separate privy spaces at the rear of the building.



HABS photograph of the east elevation of the back building.



Paneled west wall of the front parlor. Photograph by Louise Krafft.

the next 184 years. The family made very few changes to the structure during their ownership. In 1936, the structure was recorded for its historic and architectural significance by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Department of the Interior (drawings and photographs can be accessed on-line at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=517%20prince%20street%20alexandria%20va&co=hh>).

The rooms are small within; no family today could live in this house without destroying the stories it has to tell. It is a rich document of domestic history and a veritable laboratory of old carpentry methods. The dwelling and back building are in a remarkable state of preservation, with building fabric and finishes virtually unaltered since their early construction. A vast number of little things have survived—original paint, wallpapers, hooks, latches, door hardware, traces of rudimentary bell systems and ancient glass in the old sash windows. The house is recognized by local and regional historians as a “fascinating microcosm of a complete single family dwelling, containing in addition to the usual living, dining and bedrooms and kitchen, rooms for servants and storage rooms, all under one roof.”

The property was purchased from the family in 2000 by antiquarian, Joseph C. Reeder. In 2014, he received the Alexandria Archaeology Commission award for his careful stewardship of the building and installation of modern building system upgrades without loss of authenticity. Mr. Reeder, now 89 years old, understands the importance of the building and is eager to ensure its survival without intrusive alterations. However, property values in Old Town are high; the lot alone of 517 Prince is assessed at \$1.4 million dollars; the building at \$500,000. Mr. Reeder has offered to sell the property to the City for \$1.25 million, a sum that would allow retirement of his debt on it; the residual equity would be a gift to the City. But where will the money for purchase come from, in what is always a very tight municipal budget?

The answer was suggested by an informed citizen, who knew of a grants program administered by the Virginia Land Conservation Fund. The Office of Historic Alexandria submitted a grant proposal, in the historic preservation category, for \$1.25 million. To our surprise and delight, the Board of the VLCF awarded \$900,000 to the City for the purpose of acquiring this highly significant property for public use; the remainder of the purchase price will be raised from the private sector.

HAF has pledged its assistance with this fund-raising effort and intends to give a lead gift to the project. Your financial support of *Toasting Our Town 2016* will be dedicated to this effort.

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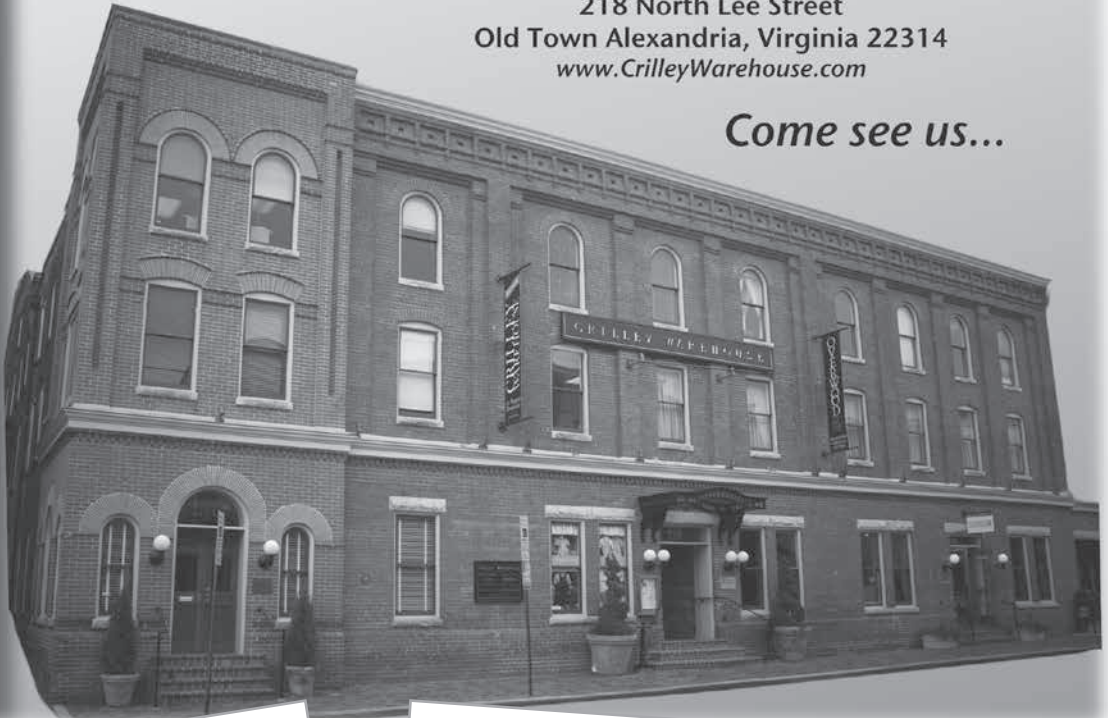
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